

Notable Disproportionate Underrepresentation Self-Assessments

Data, Policies, Practices, and Procedures Examined from the 2007-2008 School Year

Notable TN Disproportionate Underrepresentation Reviews (07-08 School Year)

OVERVIEW

District Disproportionate Underrepresentation Self-Assessments of Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Identification of Students with Disabilities

Annually, the Department of Education, Division of Special Education is required to review the December 1 Unduplicated Census Data for students identified with disabilities in order to determine Tennessee school districts with *Disproportionate Underrepresentation*. The State's review of this data utilizes a federally-approved *relative risk ratio (RRR)* and the *weighted risk ratio (WRR)* for the examination of students with disabilities in each of the federal reporting race/ethnicity categories (American Indian/Native Alaskan, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, and White) for all students receiving services in special education and related services and the high incidence disability categories of Autism, Emotional Disturbance, Mental Retardation, Other Health Impairments, Specific Learning Disabilities, and Speech and Language Impairment. In simple terms, the *relative risk ratio (RRR)* and the *weighted risk ratio (WRR)* measure the proportionate identification of student sub-groups at the individual district level and at the State level.

Subsequent to this data review, school districts with disproportionate underrepresentation are notified of this status and are required to conduct a self-assessment of practices, policies, and procedures employed in the identification of children with disabilities. A template is provided to each district completing this self-assessment to serve as a guide for the district's examination of *child find*-practices specific to the racial/ethnic sub-group identified with disproportionate underrepresentation. Each self-assessment is submitted to the Division of Special Education so that a determination may be made on whether the district's disproportionate underrepresentation is the result of inappropriate identification. This self-assessment provides district responses that address the following areas of focus.

1. Are there any cultural differences that may contribute to the under-identification of those students identified with disproportionate underrepresentation in this racial/ethnic group and disability? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes – please describe: _____
2. Is the identified student sub-group(s) either primarily transient or migrant? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes – please provide data and documentation and explain how this may contribute to the under-identification of this student sub-group with this disability: _____
3. Are there students in the identified race/ethnicity who have met the criteria for the disability in which they are under-identified whose needs can be met in the general education classroom (i.e., met the first prong for eligibility and did not meet the second prong for eligibility)?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 - a. If yes, are these students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Provide data or documentation to evidence this: _____
 - b. If yes, are there students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom through a 504 Plan? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Provide data or documentation to evidence this: _____
4. Describe child-find activities in your district that are specific to the disproportionately underrepresented population: _____
5. Provide any additional information that describes activities or procedures in place to ensure that all student ethnic groups have been adequately included in your district's child find efforts. _____

The Disproportionate Underrepresentation Self-Assessment was conducted by the 15 districts identified with disproportionate underrepresentation for data reviewed in FFY 2007 (2007-2008 school year). Zero districts (0%) of these districts were found to have disproportionate underrepresentation as the result of inappropriate identification. The seven self-assessments included in this document represent those district self-assessments that demonstrated notable policies, practices, and procedures to help ensure all students are identified through *child find* and provided with services in special education, when appropriate.

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School System: Davidson County Serves students in grades: PreK-12
Underrepresented Sub-Group: H (Hispanic)

Disability Category(ies) Underrepresented for this Student Sub-Group:
ED (Emotional Disturbance) OHI (Other Health Impairment)

1. Are there any cultural differences that may contribute to the under-identification of those students identified with disproportionate underrepresentation in this racial/ethnic group and disability? ☒ Yes ☐ No If yes – please describe: **This particular population tends to have a negative impression of disabilities. Some members of this population interpret disabilities as shameful.**
2. Is the identified student sub-group(s) either primarily transient or migrant? ☒ Yes ☐ No
If yes – please provide data and documentation and explain how this may contribute to the under-identification of this student sub-group with this disability: **Nashville census data demonstrates a significant increase of immigrants from Mexico.**
3. Are there students in the identified race/ethnicity who have met the criteria for the disability in which they are under-identified whose needs can be met in the general education classroom (i.e., met the first prong for eligibility and did not meet the second prong for eligibility)? ☒ Yes ☐ No
 - a. If yes, are these students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom? ☒ Yes ☐ No
Provide data or documentation to evidence this: **Some students in this category have success in the general education setting despite their diagnosis of ADHD.**
 - b. If yes, are there students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom through a 504 Plan? ☒ Yes ☐ No
Provide data or documentation to evidence this: **We have Hispanic students with ADHD who receive instruction and accommodations in the general education classroom through a 504 Plan.**
4. Describe child-find activities in your district that are specific to the disproportionately underrepresented population: **Our district's child-find efforts include public distribution of special education brochures outlining services and procedures, public meetings with parents of students with disabilities and parentally placed private school and home schooled children and private school officials. In addition, we maintain effective communication with the following agencies: Homeless Education, Migrant Education, the Health Department, the ELL Department, the Department of Corrections, and Volunteer Lottery Funded Pre-K. We also communicate through Parent Newsletters and the MNPS website about special education services.**
5. Provide any additional information that describes activities or procedures in place to ensure that all student ethnic groups have been adequately included in your district's child find efforts. **In our district, we use a Student Support Team process to provide assistance to students who are struggling with academics or behaviors. When students are struggling in areas that are symptomatic of ADHD or Emotional Disturbance, they are referred to the Student Support Team for help. Those students who continue to struggle in spite of appropriate intervention may be referred for psycho-educational evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services as either Other Health Impaired or Emotionally Disturbed.**

Notable TN Disproportionate Underrepresentation Reviews (07-08 School Year)

School System: Hamblen County Serves students in grades: PreK-12
Underrepresented Sub-Group: H (Hispanic)

Disability Category(ies) Underrepresented for this Student Sub-Group:
MR (Mental Retardation) OHI (Other Health Impairment)

1. Are there any cultural differences that may contribute to the under-identification of those students identified with disproportionate underrepresentation in this racial/ethnic group and disability? ☒ Yes ☐ No If yes – please describe: **The major cultural difference in the Hispanic population is language. According to Easylep, 30% of our Hispanic students with disabilities are certified as developmentally delayed which is inclusive of language and social/emotional behavior which may be a characteristic of ADHD, or Other Health Impairment. The criteria required concerning cognitive functioning at two standard deviations below the mean is the same for both developmentally delayed and mental retardation. If Spanish is the only language spoken at home, then the school psychologist may be hesitant in contributing to the certification of mental retardation due to the child's age. Often times, the younger the child, the less validity the results produce.**
2. Is the identified student sub-group(s) either primarily transient or migrant? ☒ Yes ☐ No
If yes – please provide data and documentation and explain how this may contribute to the under-identification of this student sub-group with this disability: **According to the Title I, Part C-Migrant Education Program report for Hamblen County, 929 Hispanic students were eligible for the migrant education program. Of these children, 298 migrant children had moved within the last 12 months, 338 had moved within the previous 13-24 months, and 194 migrant students had moved within the previous 25-36 months. Hispanic students with a high rate of mobility have difficulty completing tier intervention programming designed to provide educational benefits for students with interruptions in their school career. Our immigrant count is so high that last year we qualified for one of state's three immigrant grants.**
3. Are there students in the identified race/ethnicity who have met the criteria for the disability in which they are under-identified whose needs can be met in the general education classroom (i.e., met the first prong for eligibility and did not meet the second prong for eligibility)? ☐ Yes ☒ No
 - a. If yes, are these students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom? ☐ Yes ☐ No Provide data or documentation to evidence this:
 - b. If yes, are there students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom through a 504 Plan? ☐ Yes ☐ No Provide data or documentation to evidence this:
4. Describe child-find activities in your district that are specific to the disproportionately underrepresented population: **Hamblen County Schools utilize a variety of advertising and regularly scheduled screenings to locate Hispanic students aged 3-21 who are suspected of having a disability. Advertisements seeking children with disabilities are placed in the Hispanic newspaper on a regular basis. The distribution list for Child Find brochures is translated to Spanish and distributed to physician's offices, churches, day cares, mental health agencies, the Youth Emergency Shelter, homeless shelters and detention centers and the Health Department. The Spanish translated Child Find brochures are also distributed to local laundramats and campgrounds.**

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5. Provide any additional information that describes activities or procedures in place to ensure that all student ethnic groups have been adequately included in your district's child find efforts. **Hamblen County is fortunate to offer an innovative program called The International Center. This newcomer program is for all non-English speaking students newly enrolled in public schools for the first time. Child Find flyers and brochures seeking students with disabilities are available for teachers, students, and parents at the International Center. Hamblen County Schools also employs a district-wide liason to the Hispanic community. This liaison coordinates referrals from non-English speaking parents in the Hispanic community. I was unable to add additional team meeting review dates. Our team met 7/18/08, 8/1/08, and 8/11/08.**

Notable TN Disproportionate Underrepresentation Reviews (07-08 School Year)

School System: Lebanon City Serves students in grades: PreK-8
Underrepresented Sub-Group: B (Black)

Disability Category(ies) Underrepresented for this Student Sub-Group: OHI (Other Health Impairment)

1. Are there any cultural differences that may contribute to the under-identification of those students identified with disproportionate underrepresentation in this racial/ethnic group and disability? ☐ Yes ☒ No If yes – please describe:
2. Is the identified student sub-group(s) either primarily transient or migrant? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If yes – please provide data and documentation and explain how this may contribute to the under-identification of this student sub-group with this disability:
3. Are there students in the identified race/ethnicity who have met the criteria for the disability in which they are under-identified whose needs can be met in the general education classroom (i.e., met the first prong for eligibility and did not meet the second prong for eligibility)? ☐ Yes ☒ No
 - a. If yes, are these students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom? ☐ Yes ☐ No Provide data or documentation to evidence this:
 - b. If yes, are there students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom through a 504 Plan? ☐ Yes ☐ No Provide data or documentation to evidence this:
4. Describe child-find activities in your district that are specific to the disproportionately underrepresented population: **Current child find activities in the Lebanon SSD include advertisement through local media venues, participation in community-based events with literature regarding the child-find process, literature distributed to local physician's offices and health department, and meetings with the two identified private school programs; all of which aim to seek out, evaluate and identify a child with a disability. LSSD does not discriminate by race, gender, or ethnicity in its efforts to find, evaluate, and determine eligibility.**
5. Provide any additional information that describes activities or procedures in place to ensure that all student ethnic groups have been adequately included in your district's child find efforts. **Lebanon SSD has implemented a Professional Intervention Team at each school which is responsible for identifying any student at risk for academic or behavioral challenges. This process aligns with a Response to Intervention model where interventions are provided systematically for the student. It is a team decision to recommend further testing for the student; in this case specifically, for black students at risk to be identified as Health Impaired. Should the team refer the child for testing, testing is completed in a timely manner and when appropriate, shared with a physician for a diagnosis which may then result in an eligibility determination. The IEP team is then charged with determining if the Health Impairment is adversely affecting his/her performance in the classroom. Special Education services would be considered based on that decision. The Lebanon SSD also includes an in-depth training program in the area of "poverty training". This research based training introduces alternative methods of reaching and teaching minority students. This may be considered a factor in the**

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underrepresentation citation noted for our district. The teacher's knowledge of how to provide quality instruction for this population reduces the amount of referrals for black students as Health Impaired.

Notable TN Disproportionate Underrepresentation Reviews (07-08 School Year)

School System: Loudon County Serves students in grades: PreK-12
Underrepresented Sub-Group: H (Hispanic)

Disability Category(ies) Underrepresented for this Student Sub-Group: S-L (Speech and Language Impairments)

1. Are there any cultural differences that may contribute to the under-identification of those students identified with disproportionate underrepresentation in this racial/ethnic group and disability? ☐ Yes ☒ No If yes – please describe:
2. Is the identified student sub-group(s) either primarily transient or migrant? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If yes – please provide data and documentation and explain how this may contribute to the under-identification of this student sub-group with this disability:
3. Are there students in the identified race/ethnicity who have met the criteria for the disability in which they are under-identified whose needs can be met in the general education classroom (i.e., met the first prong for eligibility and did not meet the second prong for eligibility)? ☐ Yes ☒ No
 - a. If yes, are these students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom? ☐ Yes ☐ No Provide data or documentation to evidence this: N/A
 - b. If yes, are there students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom through a 504 Plan? ☐ Yes ☐ No Provide data or documentation to evidence this: N/A
4. Describe child-find activities in your district that are specific to the disproportionately underrepresented population: A coordinated effort for child find, evaluation, and provision of services is evident in Loudon County. Loudon County Schools utilizes a variety of advertising and regularly scheduled screenings to locate students aged 3 through 21 who are suspected of having a disability. Child Find activities are publicized through the following methods: local newspaper articles, public service announcements, website postings, annual student registration materials, Annual Child Find Brochures, Annual Child Find Day Screening, PK-K screenings, and postal delivery of child find letters to a variety of agencies which include but are not limited to local churches, local pediatricians, Loudon County Health Department, all Loudon County Schools, University of Tennessee Development and Genetic Center, Department of Children's Services, Mid East Head Start, TEIS, TIPS, Good Samaritan Center, Family Resource Center, and private/home school application packets. Child Find Memorandums are distributed to a variety of sources in an attempt to reach families of all ethnic groups including highly mobile, homeless, and non-English speakers. Academic benchmarks are conducted three times a year at all elementary and middle schools to identify students at risk for academic difficulty. Classroom teachers and/or parents also can refer students to the school support team. The school support team reviews benchmark data and classroom work.
5. Provide any additional information that describes activities or procedures in place to ensure that all student ethnic groups have been adequately included in your district's child find efforts. Notices and childfind letters are available both in English and Spanish. Loudon County does employ ELL teachers and interpreters and they are available whenever there is a need for additional assistance.

Notable TN Disproportionate Underrepresentation Reviews (07-08 School Year)

School System: Manchester City Serves students in grades: PreK-9
Underrepresented Sub-Group: H (Hispanic)

Disability Category(ies) Underrepresented for this Student Sub-Group: S-L (Speech and Language Impairments)

1. Are there any cultural differences that may contribute to the under-identification of those students identified with disproportionate underrepresentation in this racial/ethnic group and disability? ☐ Yes ☒ No If yes – please describe:
2. Is the identified student sub-group(s) either primarily transient or migrant? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If yes – please provide data and documentation and explain how this may contribute to the under-identification of this student sub-group with this disability:
3. Are there students in the identified race/ethnicity who have met the criteria for the disability in which they are under-identified whose needs can be met in the general education classroom (i.e., met the first prong for eligibility and did not meet the second prong for eligibility)? ☐ Yes ☒ No
 - a. If yes, are these students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom? ☐ Yes ☐ No Provide data or documentation to evidence this:
 - b. If yes, are there students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom through a 504 Plan? ☐ Yes ☐ No Provide data or documentation to evidence this:
4. Describe child-find activities in your district that are specific to the disproportionately underrepresented population: **The Manchester City Schools District annually promotes child-find activities which specifically address the Hispanic population in the area of speech and language. Each spring the district conducts a district-wide pre-k screening. Translators are available for the non English speaking population. All participants are screened for speech and language deficits by our speech/language pathologists. Those with significant deficits are referred for complete speech and language evaluations. In the fall of each school year, all Kindergarten students are given the Fluharty speech and language screener. All students identified with basic speech or language deficits participate in Early Intervening Services. These services assist students with remediating basic speech and language deficits through early intervention before referrals are made. The Community Learning Center at Westwood Elementary also provides an annual pre-k screening for Hispanic children in our district. This center screened 20 Hispanic children during the spring and forwarded the screening information to the appropriate school staff. The center also provides English classes for Hispanic parents. During the parent English classes, childcare is provided for their children using language rich activities to promote appropriate development. Also, transportation is provided for families who need to be transported to the center to participate in the classes. Speech and Language pathologists are located at each school in the district. Teachers regularly consult with the pathologists concerning any student who may exhibit speech or language irregularities.**
5. Provide any additional information that describes activities or procedures in place to ensure that all student ethnic groups have been adequately included in your district's child find efforts. **The Manchester City Schools District ensures that all student**

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ethnic groups have been adequately included by: advertising the annual pre-k screening in both English and Spanish, making reasonable efforts to provide communication in a language that can be understood by all parents, transporting parents and children when transportation is an issue, etc. Childfind activities include: Announcements on local cable/radio and district website, Pamphlets placed in area doctor's offices, businesses and private schools, Articles placed in local newspapers, and Fliers placed in the Health Department, Housing Authority and Department of Human Services.

Notable TN Disproportionate Underrepresentation Reviews (07-08 School Year)

School System: Memphis City Serves students in grades: PreK-12
Underrepresented Sub-Group: H (Hispanic)

Disability Category(ies) Underrepresented for this Student Sub-Group:
ED (Emotional Disturbance) OHI (Other Health Impairment)

1. Are there any cultural differences that may contribute to the under-identification of those students identified with disproportionate underrepresentation in this racial/ethnic group and disability? ☒ Yes ☐ No If yes – please describe: **According to the literature, Hispanic culture is collectivist in nature. They are very family-oriented and children are socialized to be dependent on family members. When problems occur, they tend to take care of them within the family or within their religious organization. Also, schools are hesitant to refer a child for testing when there is a question about whether problems are due to language or disability.**
2. Is the identified student sub-group(s) either primarily transient or migrant? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If yes – please provide data and documentation and explain how this may contribute to the under-identification of this student sub-group with this disability:
3. Are there students in the identified race/ethnicity who have met the criteria for the disability in which they are under-identified whose needs can be met in the general education classroom (i.e., met the first prong for eligibility and did not meet the second prong for eligibility)? ☐ Yes ☒ No
 - a. If yes, are these students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Provide data or documentation to evidence this:
 - b. If yes, are there students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom through a 504 Plan? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Provide data or documentation to evidence this:
4. Describe child-find activities in your district that are specific to the disproportionately underrepresented population: **Child-Find brochures are posted in strategic locations in the community; Child-Find advertisements are printed in local newspapers; Public service announcements for radio and TV are being prepared in Spanish as well as English; All screening and referral paperwork is available in Spanish; Spanish-speaking interpreters are provided for conferences with parents.**
5. Provide any additional information that describes activities or procedures in place to ensure that all student ethnic groups have been adequately included in your district's child find efforts. **The Division of Exceptional Children and Health Services works closely with the ESL Office to meet the needs of all student ethnic groups in child find efforts. The district subscribes to Transact.com which is a translation service that provides IDEA forms, notices, and informational publications, as well as general education forms and notices. in many languages. The ESL office makes every effort to provide interpreters for parent conferences when students are having problems which may result in special education referrals. In addition, the ESL office is working with psychologists to develop appropriate RtI procedures for ESL students.**

Notable TN Disproportionate Underrepresentation Reviews (07-08 School Year)

School System: Rutherford County Serves students in grades: PreK-12
Underrepresented Sub-Group: H (Hispanic)

Disability Category(ies) Underrepresented for this Student Sub-Group:

A (Autism)

OHI (Other Health Impairment)

1. Are there any cultural differences that may contribute to the under-identification of those students identified with disproportionate underrepresentation in this racial/ethnic group and disability? ☒ Yes ☐ No If yes – please describe: **(1) Many Hispanic families receive poor health care because of a lack of insurance and financial ability. Health care is often limited to emergency room care that does not provide a long-term relationship with a doctor who might note symptoms of autism and other health-related problems. (2) Many Hispanic families are unaware of the services that are available in the U.S. because these services were not available in their homeland. Based on their experiences in their homeland they assume that services are not available. Language barriers often keep these newly-arrived families from learning of the services that are available and from effectively seeking these services (3) Frequently Hispanic children with disabilities are not brought into the U.S. when families immigrate to this country. Often they are left in their homeland with extended family members due to the uncertainty of moving to a new culture.**
2. Is the identified student sub-group(s) either primarily transient or migrant? ☒ Yes ☐ No
If yes – please provide data and documentation and explain how this may contribute to the under-identification of this student sub-group with this disability: **Some Hispanic families in Rutherford County can be considered "transient". While data on all Hispanic families is not available we do know that close to 10% of the Hispanic families with children with disabilities moved during the 2007-2008 school year. It has been observed on many occasions that it is difficult to complete evaluations on transient students, that before we can meet to determine eligibility the family has moved. Frequently a student moves to our district and we learn an evaluation was started in their previous county but before we can complete the process the family will move out of our district. Also, there is considerable movement on the north end of our county with families moving back and forth from the Antioch area of Nashville. There is a large Hispanic population in the Antioch area. This particular area has many low socio-economic families that tend to be transient.**
3. Are there students in the identified race/ethnicity who have met the criteria for the disability in which they are under-identified whose needs can be met in the general education classroom (i.e., met the first prong for eligibility and did not meet the second prong for eligibility)? ☐ Yes ☒ No
 - a. If yes, are these students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom? ☐ Yes ☐ No Provide data or documentation to evidence this:
 - b. If yes, are there students provided with accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom through a 504 Plan? ☐ Yes ☐ No Provide data or documentation to evidence this:
4. Describe child-find activities in your district that are specific to the disproportionately underrepresented population: **Spanish-language child-find brochures are distributed throughout the county to the following sites: county health department offices, doctors offices, day care centers, laundromats, and to other agencies serving pre-school children. These brochures are also made available to every identified homeless family with children in the county. Radio**

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announcements giving information about child-find events are made on local radio stations. The ESL Department provides translators for the Child Find events that are scheduled each Spring. The ESL Department also employs a Parent Involvement Coordinator who works with Hispanic families on many levels to ensure that they receive information and services. The Homeless Coordinator and ESL teachers are aware of community services that are available and refer parents to those services. ESL teachers refer students (and parents) to 504 or special education accordingly. Forms and informational brochures are translated into Spanish.

5. Provide any additional information that describes activities or procedures in place to ensure that all student ethnic groups have been adequately included in your district's child find efforts. **The activities detailed in #4 (above) are conducted with consideration for all ethnic groups in Rutherford County.**